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# WHO IS E.K.?

By Dr. Raymond Jenkins

WHO is E.K. of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender?* The identification of the writer of the epistle to Harvey, the arguments of the eclogues, and the Gloss is still a crux in literary history.

The commonly accepted assumption is that E.K. was Edward Kirke. Two reasons have been advanced to support it. First, a certain Mistress Kerke, who may have been Spenser's hostess and postmistress in Westminster, is referred to in the Spenser-Harvey Letters. Secondly, a sizar at Cambridge, who proceeded M.A. and whom Spenser may have known, was named Edward Kirke; and E.K. may stand for his name.

This assumption, to my mind, is groundless. First, for Mistress Kerke there is no evidence in any document of Spenser, or Harvey, or anybody else connecting her with the E.K. of the *Calender,* or the Edward Kirke of Cambridge and of Risby, Suffolk, where he spent most of his days. And is not Kirke a name almost as common as Jones or Spencer? Secondly, there is not a shred of evidence that Spencer knew Edward Kirke of Cambridge intimately. True, they were both sizars at Pembroke. But Kirke changed his residence from Pembroke to Caius, and is it not therefore likely that most of Kirke's intimate friends resided in Caius? Not once in all his writings does Spenser refer to Edward Kirke; nor is there any evidence that their paths ever crossed. Indeed, no data so far ascertained about Kirke connect him with London or Bromley where he presumably would have to be if he might be the close collaborator that E.K. unquestionably was.

Many scholars have held that Spenser would never have had the effrontery to praise himself and that E.K. must therefore be somebody else. This argument was stressed many years ago by three critics of Elizabethan literature.

Sir Sidney Lee avers: "If Spenser were the author of E.K.'s preface and notes, he would be exposed to a charge of repulsive immodesty in lavishing praise upon himself; but it is incredible that the poet who disguised himself in his early works under the pseudonym of 'Immerito' should be guilty of this offense."[1] John Payne Collier ridicules "the absurd speculations hazarded by some critics that Spenser had in fact been his own editor and consequently his own laudator."[2] The Reverend A. B. Grosart, who took it for granted in his life of the poet that E.K. was Edward Kirke, writes that such an identification "commends itself as against the fantastic and impossible theories whereby Spenser is made out to have been his own Glosse writer."[3]

Accepting E.K. as Kirke, Professor F. J. Child comments: "To say nothing of the meanness of a man's praising himself under a disguise, we should be sorry to think Spenser capable of the pedantry and folly which the comments of E.K. display."[4] The American, James J. Higginson, who made a study of the *Calender,* and the two distinguished English editors, C. H. Herford and W. L. Renwick, chime in with their fellow-critics. And Professor J. C. Smith in the *Britannica* declares that C. H. Herford in his edition has disproved "the notion that E.K. is a mask for Spenser himself." Accepting the assumption that E.K. is Edward Kirke, De Selincourt says it is "natural," and Renwick that it is "the common sense solution." Yet of the theory that E.K. was but another pseudonym for Spenser, Professor Renwick admits: "Certainly there is little inherent absurdity in the notion: strange things were done with initials at the period, and Spenser was shy enough to publish these poems (*The Shepheardes Calender*) anonymously."[5]

In a recent article Agnes D. Kuersteiner effectively refutes Herford's positions and advances some excellent arguments to support her contention that E.K. is Spenser.[6] Yet critical opinion at present appears to support the assertion in the *Oxford Companion to English Literature:* "Modern critics have, on insufficient grounds, endeavored to prove that E.K. was Spenser himself." It is my purpose to amass the arguments, old and new, to prove that Spenser *was* E.K.

Many scholars of the nineteenth century, notably Sommer and Uhlemann, insisted that E.K. was but a mask for Spenser himself. Possibly the most acceptable expression of this hypothesis was given by G. S. Craik in 1845: "It does not seem to us impossible or very improbable. . . . No one would know so well as [the poet] himself in all cases what to disclose and what to withhold, and he would perhaps be more likely therefore to perform the office himself than intrust it to any friend. . . . It is strange that even in writing to Harvey he [the poet] should always so carefully keep to this imperfect mode of indication; he is not in the habit of naming Sidney or Dyer and his other friends by their initials; it seems impossible not to infer that there is some mystery—that more is meant than meets the ear."[7]

Sidney Lee, Collier, and Grosart thought Spenser too modest to employ the pseudonym E.K. to praise himself. But modesty has never been a virtue of authors, especially of Elizabethans. Like Harvey, Spenser was inordinately desirous of fame and ready to employ any clever device to bring himself into the limelight. Though Spenser had sublime confidence in his genius when he composed the *Calender,* he was sufficiently realistic to know that he was to all contemporary readers a nonentity. He realized that elucidation of the text by a commentator was necessary to give his pastorals standing among the learned. To employ all possible devices to enhance the mysteries of the *Calender* that he might pique the curiosity of his readers was his prime concern. Both Spenser and Harvey knew this, and both pursued all imaginable devices to publicize themselves and their works. The publication of the Spenser-Harvey Letters in 1580 was not fortuitous but was designed to enhance the mystification initiated by the *Calender.* The "Welwiller of the two authours" recalls the Benevolo (Harvey's pseudonym for Spenser) of Harvey's *Letterbook,*[8] in whose name Harvey writes many a self-laudatory preface to the writings he hoped to publish. The mystery which surrounds Immerito, E.K., and Rosalind in the *Calender* is exactly analogous to the elaborate program of the mystification which envelops the "wittie, familiar Letters." When the *Calender* was published all readers apparently took the various veiled allusions and mysteries *cum*

*grano salis;* they knew Immerito was "spoofing" them. And no one ever inquired, either in Spenser's day or for more than a hundred and fifty years, who E.K. was. The initials were too obvious a hoax, merely another palpable disguise for the pseudo-anonymous poet, *Immerito.*

Spenser never tired of praising his fellow-poets and himself. At the outset of his career he fully realized that he must impress his readers with the importance of the "new Poete". Indeed, Immerito's praises of himself through the characters of the *Calender* are as constant as are his mock-apologies for his "rude rymes". In *June,* Hobbinol says:

> Colin, to heare thy rhymes and roundelayes,
> I more delight than lark in Sommer days.

and Perigot in *August* declares:

> O Colin, Colin, the shepheards ioye,
> How I admire ech turning of thy verse:

and in *October* Cuddie acclaims the power of Colin to write heroic poetry:

> For Colin fittes such famous flight to scanne
> He, were he not with loue so ill bedight
> Would mount as high, and sing as soote as Swanne
>
> No one takes Colin seriously when he avers
>
> Of Muses Hobbinol, I conne no skill.[9]

Who takes his apologies for his "rude rymes" as other than ironical? Colin palpably feigns to be the humble shepherd-poet. No reader takes at its face-value the mock-apology so common in the dedications and the poetry of the Elizabethan age. When E.K. avers in the epistle to Harvey, which is the introduction to the *Calender,* that Immerito "nothing so much hateth as to promulgate" the secrets of his works, we take for granted that he is ironical. But Spenser, of course, realized the advantages of the pseudonym E.K. in making the *Calender* a panegyric to himself and his art. Without reproach E.K. might venture praise of the poet even more fervent than that which he lavishes upon Hobbinol. Indeed, through E.K. Spenser could declare his conviction regarding his own genius in poetry as

he does in *November,* when E.K. says with reference to Marot: "But far passing his [Marot's] reache".[10]

E.K.'s abundant praise of Spenser reveals such an intimate knowledge of the poet's works that it is hard to escape the impression that E.K. is none other than the poet himself, despite his insistence that he is merely a close friend. In the Argument to *October* E.K. tells us he thinks of publishing the new poet's treatise on poetry, *The English Poete.* In his introductory letter to Harvey, E.K. mentions some highly commendable poems of Spenser which "sleepe in silence, as his Dreames, his Legendes, his Court of Cupide." In the Gloss to *November,* E.K. says: "But I have already discoursed that at large in my Commentarye upon the dreames of the same Authour." E.K., it seems, has annotated several unpublished works of Immerito. He is very familiar with them, and he recollects lines of these lost works. In the Gloss of *June* E.K. writes: "thys same Poete in his Pageaunts sayth

> An hundred Graces on her eyeledde satte.

and in the Gloss of *October,* under *As soote as Swanne,* E.K. writes: "As well sayth the Poete elsewhere in one of his sonetts

> The silver swanne doth sing before her dying day
> As she that feeles the deepe delight that is in death.

In the Gloss of *March* E.K. says of "Moschus his Idyllion of wondring loue," "I have seene amongst other of thys Poets doings, very wel translated also into Englishe Rymes."[11] These comments of E.K., which show that he knew far more about the works of the "new Poete" than anyone else in the world, are in tenor identical with Spenser's remarks about his unpublished poems in the Spenser-Harvey Letters. Of the *Epithalamion Thamesis,* for instance, Spenser writes that it is "profitable for the knowledge and rare for the invention and manner of handling." Of the *Stemmata Dudleiana* Spenser, seeming to regard himself as objectively as did E.K., writes that "in his own fancie he never did better."

E.K.'s praise of Spenser is, indeed, quite unalloyed. In

the gloss of *October* only does E.K. comment on the poet's lapse from decorum, and even in this criticism he praises Spenser's audacity. Under *O if my* E.K. writes: "He seemeth here to be ravished with a Poetical furie. For (if one rightly mark) the numbers rise so full, and the verse groweth so big, that it seemeth he hath forgot the meanenesse of shepheards state and stile." Although Spenser uses countless words which are quite out of keeping with the rustic conventions of the *Calender,* such as *emperished, embellished, accloieth, enscheason, sovenaunce,* and *miscreaunce,* E.K. accepts them uncritically. He does not tax the "new Poete" with a failure to observe decorum.

But there is one person whom E.K. exalts more than Spenser. That man is Gabriel Harvey. In the introductory epistle to Harvey and in the Gloss E.K. fulsomely praises Harvey. In the gloss of *September* E.K. advertizes unpublished works of Harvey which only an intimate friend could have known. Yet there is as little proof that Edward Kirke knew Harvey as that he knew Edmund Spenser. Harvey never mentions E.K. or Edward Kirke in either his published or his unpublished works. E.K. poses, however, as a close and intimate friend of Harvey. Of the book on government[12] of Harvey's patron, Sir Thomas Smith of Audley End, E.K. writes in the *January* gloss: "I have a perfect copie in wryting, lent me by his kinseman, and my very singular good friend, M. Gabriel Harvey: as also of some other his most grave and excellent wrytings." From this note are we to conclude that Harvey, who never mentions E.K., so highly esteemed him that he entrusted him with manuscript copies of his kinsman's most valued works?

This conclusion seems tenable only if we identify E.K. with Spenser, apparently the only dear friend of Harvey. If one assumes that E.K. is an anonym of Spenser, this statement about Smith's works sounds authentic. Of all the writers of the age, Spenser and the anonymous E.K. are the only ones who fulsomely praise Harvey. In the *Postscript* of the introductory epistle E.K.'s extravagant praise of Harvey's "gallant English verses" and his "Latin Poemes, which . . . for invention and Elocution are very

delicate, and superexcellent" smacks of Spenser. Only Spenser, of all the writers of the age, would even suggest that Harvey's poetry was "superexcellent". And does not the *Postscript* appear to be Spenser's obvious insertion to please his dearest friend, Gabriel? Though the Spenser-Harvey Letters are full of friendly banter, Spenser's letters, in their effusive praises of Harvey are also in a vein similar to E.K.'s extravagant admiration in the *Calender*.

Nor should the reader be misled by E.K.'s justification of his writing of the Gloss: "him selfe [the poet] being for long time farre estraunged." Though this excuse in the epistle to Harvey seems a palpable blind, it has misled many biographers. All biographical and bibliographical evidence tends to confute E.K.'s assertions. A writer of scathing satire, Spenser would occasionally have the reader believe that E.K. was as obtuse and ignorant as "Ignaro" himself because the poet was not on hand to be consulted. Since E.K.'s epistle to Harvey is dated April 10, 1579, and since the *Calender* was entered in the Stationers' Register on December 5, 1579, the Gloss was doubtless written during 1579. There is not a shred of biographical evidence to indicate that Spenser was not either at Bromley or in London throughout the year 1579. In the Spenser-Harvey Letters, Spenser is ever about to go abroad, but there is no evidence that he ever went. A letter in Harvey's *Letterbook*[13] indicates that Spenser and Harvey sometime in the spring or summer of 1579 saw at the Bull Theatre the play *The Jew and Ptolome*. If the dates of the Spenser-Harvey Letters are of any significance, they would indicate that Spenser was in London on October 5 and 16, 1579. Dr. Mark Eccles argues convincingly that the poet married Machabyas Chylde on October 27, 1579;[14] and certainly Spenser married someone about this time. The Spenser-Harvey Letters, moreover, convey the impression that Spenser was not married suddenly after a long absence, but that the marriage was the culmination of a considerable courtship.

Besides, if Spenser were in or about London in 1579, he would surely have been in constant touch with the printer and would have seen his first pretentious publication through the press. That he habitually read the proof of all

his later work is amply attested by Dr. Francis R. Johnson's *Critical Bibliography.* For its period the *Calender* is an ingenious bit of book-making. Its format would indicate that the poet, in consultation with Hugh Singleton, the printer, selected appropriate woodcut engravings, devised the title-page, planned that *To His Booke* should be printed on $1^{v}$, that the letter of E.K. to Harvey should appear on $2^{r}$-$3^{v}$, that the General Argument should appear on $4^{r}$ and $4^{v}$, and decided that the poetry itself should be in black letter, the arguments in italic, and the Gloss in roman type. That the same person who composed the epilogue composed and proof-read the Gloss appears evident from the first four lines of the epilogue:

> Loe I have made a Calendar for every yeare,
> That steele in strength, and time in durance shall outweare;
> And if I marked well the starres revolution,
> It shall continewe till the worlds dissolution,

which seem inspired by the inaccurate quotation from Ovid in E.K.'s Gloss on the missing emblem of *December:*

> Grande opus exegi quod nec Iouis ida nec ignis,
> Nec ferrum poterit nec edax abolere vetustas &c.[15]

One would naturally assume that the epilogue was written first and the entire Gloss later; if a friend of the poet wrote the Gloss, one would assume that the entire *Calender,* including the epilogue, was before him. Yet the quotation from Ovid in the gloss of *December* apparently promoted the first four lines of the epilogue. Does not this anomaly warrant the suspicion that Spenser himself composed both Gloss and epilogue?

A close reading of the *Calender* makes one fact clear: it gives the recorded convictions of one man, the poet Edmund Spenser. But it is also the record of the influence upon the poet of three men. Of these three Harvey's influence is paramount. In his *Handbook to Spenser,* Professor Jones considers Hobbinol the presiding genius of the *Calender.* Certainly, in their praise of the tried estate, their passion for learning, their knowledge of abuses in church and court, their desire to make the vernacular the vehicle of heroic poetry, and their yearning for fame, Spenser and Harvey saw eye to eye. The two other idealized characters

which emerge from the shadowy allegory of the *Calender* are Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, and John Young, Bishop of Rochester. Except for these three, virtually all the other characters are transparently the positions and moods of one person only, Edmund Spenser.[16] In *October,* for instance, Piers and Cuddie discuss poetry. Are they not patently the two sides of Spenser: Cuddie, the negative, rational, and realistic Spenser, the satiric poet of *Colin Clout* and *Mother Hubberd;* Piers, the positive and idealistic Spenser, the poet of the *Fowre Hymnes?*[17] Neither is a full-bodied character, but the two together make the well-balanced genius, Edmund Spenser. In other words, the sundry characters of the *Calender* are typical pastoral roles, the mouthpieces of moods of the poet.

As the *Calender* is Spenser's confession of faith, the mouthpiece E.K. frequently sounds Spenser's praises as well as those of Harvey. In the Spenser-Harvey Letters, also, Spenser and Harvey extravagantly praise each other. Yet Spenser in these letters, though he writes as flambouyantly about his works as does E.K. in the *Calender,* nowhere praises E.K. except for saying regarding the Gloss to his *Dreames:* "Therein be some things excellently, and many things wittily discoursed of E.K."[18] After 1580, Spenser never mentions E.K. If E.K. were a living friend and if Spenser and E.K. were (like Harvey and Spenser) one soul in bodies twain, why was Spenser guilty of such gross ingratitude? In all his many writings, Harvey never praises or mentions E.K. In his notes in the volumes in his library, Harvey often extols the rare spirits of the age and the most admired of contemporary poets. Harvey invariably includes Spenser in the lists. But neither Edward Kirke nor anyone whose initials were E.K. is ever mentioned. Was Harvey, the "verye singular good friend," also guilty of egregious ingratitude? The inference one draws from the relative silence of Spenser and the absolute silence of Harvey regarding the mysterious E.K. is that Spenser adopted the pseudonym that he might openly declare his ardent convictions.

Throughout the *Calender* Spenser pursues a consistent pseudo-anonymity. The identity of E.K., like that of Rosa-

lind, is merely one of the mysteries of the *Calender*. The *Calender,* indeed, for both Spenser and Harvey was, like the Spenser-Harvey Letters, another clever scheme of mutual advertisement. To attract attention through their sundry hoaxes meant recognition, if not fame. In these Letters Spenser betrays his fondness for speaking of himself in the third person as well as for pseudonyms. In the letter dated October 5, 1579, Spenser begs Harvey "to thinke vpon poore Immerito as he thinketh vppon you." "The new Poete" is frequently the means by which E.K. identifies the author of the *Calender*. Throughout the volume Colin, or Colin Clout, is of course the transparent mask of the poet. But Harvey is also very fond of pseudonyms. In his *Letterbook* his dear friend is never Spenser but is ever Immerito or Benevolo. In his *Marginalia* Axiophilus is either himself or Spenser, and Chrysotechnus is also probably Harvey.

Harvey's *Letterbook* is full of pseudonyms and hoaxes. These hoaxes though they are often as fantastic as Falstaff's lies,—gross as the father who begot them—actually are a key to the interpretation of the *Calender*. For Harvey knew precisely what Spenser was aiming at in the *Calender;* he was the only one in whom Spenser would have confided all his secrets, and he would have enjoyed the clever "stratagem" of having an imaginary friend write the commentary for the *Calender*. Harvey was naturally inclined to tricks and "stratagems." Impudentia was to Harvey the "soverayne ladye and supreme goddesse of vertues". Harvey's first elaborate hoax in his *Letterbook* is a letter to Spenser protesting the publication without leave of his first attempts in English verse, his *Verlayes,* and the sending to him of a copy, "a pigg of myne own sowe." Of course, it is unlikely that Spenser ever thought of sponsoring the publication of such skimble-skamble stuff as were Harvey's *Verlayes,* though Harvey may have besought him to do it and doubtless assured him that he would compose all the dedicatory introductions. Written in a bantering vein, the letter begins: "Magnifico Signor Benevolo".[19] Harvey then protests that Benevolo has prejudiced his good name forever in thrusting him on the stage to play Wilson's or Tarleton's part. He writes that the only amends Benevolo can make is to send

"the clippings of your thris honorable mustachyoes and subboscoes to overshadow and coouer my bishinge. . . . I beseech your Beneuolenza what more notorious and villainous kind of iniurye could have been devised againste me by the mortallest enemy I haue in this whole world."[20]

From the *Letterbook* one infers that Harvey was very anxious to burst into print. There are several explanatory notes and title pages, written of course by Harvey but fathered upon Spenser. The first note one comes upon reads thus: "a neue Pamflett conteininge a fewe delicate posticall devises of Mr. G. H. . . . immediately vppon ye reporte of ye deathe of M. Georg Gascoigne. . . . Published by a familiar frende of his, that copyed them oute praesently after they were first compiled with ye same frends preface of dutifull commendation."[21] Next appears a preface, written of course by Harvey but so devised that it appears to be by Spenser, of two letters of Harvey, the first addressed to Spenser and the second to "an old fantasticall miller."[22] Acting the role of Spenser the editor, Harvey prefaces these letters as "twoe pleasaunte and merry conceited letters, one to myself [Spenser] immediately before his Masters Commencement [Harvey's, of course], which two letters I fownde . . . amongst a number of myne oulde scattered papers. . . . The letter to my selfe /verbatim as/ it was deliuered unto me in an Inne of Courte/ in his own hande." Now, let us note that this preface is all a fabrication of Harvey. The letter was not found by Spenser among his "oulde scattered papers," nor was it given by Harvey to Spenser in "an Inne of Courte," for it obviously could never have left Harvey's private notebook.

Though none of these projected prefaces or schemes got beyond Harvey's private papers, this kind of hoax, which he was tempted to employ to make himself known, is common in the *Letterbook.* The *Letterbook,* in fact, contains a series of introductions written by Harvey, but purporting to be by Spenser, to the prose and poetry which Harvey would fain see in print. If these works of Harvey had ever been published, the casual reader might have taken for granted that the prefaces were written by Spenser, for these

prefaces contain much adulation of Harvey and affect a disinclination on Harvey's part to have his works appear in print. In one Spenser is made to write: "I since obtained of him [Harvey] with mutch ado . . . ;[23] in another "in whom nothinge is vulgar but ether in respecte of the manner or matter to my seeming very singular. . . ."[24]

The most interesting hoax of Harvey in the *Letterbook,* especially in its relation to the *Calender,* is a dedication which appears as a projected title-page giving two possible arrangements of five of his works.[25] This dedication reads thus: "To the right worshipfull gentleman /And famous courtier /Master Edwarde Diar /In honour of his rare qualityes /And noble vertues." The name Benevolo appears under this dedication. To the left of "Benevolo" and in the margin is written *Quod vult Deus.* Under *Quod vult Deus* appear the initials J.W. The only interpretation one can give this is that Harvey thought of fathering these dedications and prefaces upon J.W., if Spenser (Benevolo) objected to being made to appear to be the writer. Who is J.W.? like the question *Who is E.K.?* might have been a first-class literary puzzle if the works had ever been printed. In other words, Harvey thought of employing the same hoax which Spenser appears to have employed in the *Calender.*

The "stratagems" which Harvey projected in the *Letterbook* were abortive. But the Spenser-Harvey Letters illustrate a relatively successful attempt of Harvey to deceive the public. The letter by a Welwiller of the two authors, which prefaces the Spenser-Harvey Letters is patently Harvey's own composition; Harvey is Spenser's and his own press agent. In both *Strange Newes* and *Have With You to Saffron-Walden,* Thomas Nashe ridiculed Harvey for writing *The Welwillers Epistle* in praise of himself, for Nashe was not duped by his clumsy artifices. Its apparent ingenuousness is precisely similar to many of his unpublished prefaces in his *Letterbook.* Though readers have not been deceived by the letter of the "Welwiller," virtually all readers have assumed that the letters of Harvey were written at Cambridge and those of Spenser in Westminster, that these letters were actually sent through the mails, that Mis-

tress Kerke was an actual postmistress, that the dates are authentic and not spurious. Yet none of these assumptions is valid, once one becomes fully aware that these letters illustrate Harvey's "stratagems," that they are deliberately written for publication, and that they are designed to advertise the talents of Spenser and Harvey. Once one realizes that Harvey and Spenser are making game of the reader, one asks why these letters should not have been concocted by Harvey and Spenser in a room together, and why appropriate dates should not have been affixed shortly before publication.

There are, indeed, sufficient errors in the dating of these epistles to lead one to conclude that they were largely written by Spenser and Harvey while they were in Westminster together and that they never passed through the mails.[26] The confusion of dates in the fourth letter of Spenser, supposedly written on the 15th and 16th of October and yet, according to the dating at the end, sent on October 5th, is not easily explained. But one can not explain the gross error of Spenser in the first letter. This letter refers to an earthquake which occurred on April 6, 1580. Yet Spenser's letter is dated *Quarto Nonas* Aprilis [April 2], Professor G. C. Moore Smith thinks the *Nonas* is a slip for *Idus*.[27] Rather, may one not justly assume that Spenser's memory merely played him false, and that the dates are quite factitious, affixed by the authors shortly before they arranged for publication?

[*To be continued*]

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[1]*D.N.B.* Entry under Edward Kirke.

[2]*Poetical Works* of Spenser, (London, 1862) I. xxxii.

[3]*Complete Works,* I. 118.

[4]*Poetical Works,* I. xiii, n.

[4]Poetical Works, I. xiii, n.

[5]*The Shepherd's Calendar,* ed. W. L. Renwick, p. 172. In his *Literary History of the English People* (2. 464), Jusserand suggests that Ronsard's first book of odes, 1550, with a comment by an unidentified I.M.P. is a precedent for E.K. *Cf.* Osgood's Variorum edition of Spenser's Minor Poems, I. 650.

[6]E.K. is Spenser", PMLA, 50 (1935), 140-155.

[7]*Spenser and His Poetry,* I. 33-34.

[8]Ed. J. L. Scott (Camden Society), London, 1884.

[9]*June* 65.

[10]*November,* Argument.

[11]E.K. has apparently seen Spenser's translation of a poem on Love the Runaway. This theme is amplified in the sprightly story of Venus' search for Cupid in the *Faerie Queene* (III. vi, 11-25).

[12]Smith's treatise *de Republica Anglorum,* which E.K. unquestionably read, was not published, as Professor Renwick points out (p. 181), till 1581, four years after Smith's death and two years after E.K.'s note was written. For further comment on Harvey, E.K., and the Spenser-Harvey letters, see Mrs. Agnes Kuersteiner, *op. cit.,* pp. 145, 152-155.

[13]P. 78.

[14]*TLS* 30 (Dec. 31, 1931), 1053.

[15]*Met.* 15, 871-2. The quotation should be

Imaque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
Nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.

[16]Even Professor Herford, who taught E.K. a separate personality, admitted that the pastoral disguise throughout the *Calendar* was very thin. Professor Renwick (p. 241) says: "the personalities are secondary, and attached to real men partially and vaguely."

[17]Cf. Herford (pp. 171-2): "Piers . . . represents the loftier idealism of Spenser's nature . . . Cuddie is the Spenser who was subdued by love . . . to silent despair." Also cf. De Selincourt (Oxford ed., pp. xvi-vii): "Whether the characters are meant to portray actual persons has been disputed; but it is clear enough that they prefigure two conflicting elements in the poet's own nature; the practical-eager for fame, and inclined to value poetry at its market price, . . . and the ideal. . . ."

[18]*Postscripte* of the first of the *Three proper wittie familiar Letters.*

[19]P. 58.

[20]P. 60.

[21]P. 55.

[22]P. 77.

[23]P. 73.

[24]P. 99.

[25]P. 95.

[26]Cf. Charles Hughes, "Land Travel", *Shakespeare's England* I. 201: "The Elizabethan postal system was solely designed for the conveyance of persons in the Government service and of official correspondence by official messengers. No provision was attempted by the Government for the carriage or delivery of private correspondence, which was left entirely to unofficial effort."

[27]*Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia,* p. 29n.

# SHAKSPERE'S CLEOPATRA

By Leo Kirschbaum

THE purpose of this note is to indicate the essential unity of Shakspere's Cleopatra. It probably says nothing which has not in general statements already been suggested by other critics. But it does bring into sharper focus a salient quality in the queen's character which commentators have tended to shy from. One either reads the play, or he does not read the play. The critic, as well as the editor, cannot, by his very vocation, be a Bowdler. Furthermore, this note definitely violates one of the standards of the kind of dramatic criticism in which I believe; it dissociates a character from the play in which this character is but one segment of the plot. In art the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Cleopatra does not exist in the artifact apart from Antony, Iras, and the rest. It is the interaction of the deeds, speeches, and personalities of all the characters that makes up a play. The audience sees not a single figure but an ensemble, hears not a solo but a symphony. I have tried to show my awareness of this fact in some of my footnotes.

Schücking asserts that Cleopatra is not a unified, coherent, consistent character. The woman of the last two acts, "inwardly and outwardly a queen, has but little in common with the harlot of the first part."[1] Before Antony's decline she is a strumpet;[2] in the last events she is "an ideal figure," comparable to Desdemona and Imogen.[3] Herford refuses to accept Schücking's analysis:

> "We are here concerned only to describe a critical method, not to discuss its results; but it is obvious to note, first, that the drama describes precisely a growth of the light liaison between the triumvir and the queen into a fierce though fitful passion which has moments of self-forgetting devotion (when no serious sacrifice is involved); and second, that even in this second phase the coquette, even the hard and brutal woman, flashes out at moments too; in her consummate dying speech, lover and actress, the jealous woman and the magnificent queen, the mistress of a Roman, who wishes to die like him "after the high Roman fashion", and the

> Oriental weakling who experimented first in "easy ways to die"—all are intermingled. The test of Cleopatra's coherence is not that a rather wooden mind may not discover inconsistency in the play of her "infinite variety", but that she impresses our imagination, not in spite of her variety but by and through it, as a personality superbly real and one."[14]

Stoll sides with Herford:

> "But the essential unifying element in the character is, I think, overlooked by both critics. It is . . . rather in the speech, the identity of tone, than in the deeper psychological structure or the mental attitude. It would take many words for me to show this—there are so many facets to her glittering figure—if indeed I could show it at all. There are glimpses of her humour, for instance, not only in her death scene but at Antony's death. And her spontaneous explosiveness appears when she calls Dolabella a liar and vents her rage on Seleucus, as when she called Antony one, raved against the Messenger, and threatened Charmian with bloody teeth. She is not wholly sublime and ideal as Professor Shücking takes her now to be. She abuses the gods and rails at Fortune when Antony dies, as she has always done at whatever thwarted her. She remembers Octavia continually and vindictively, with her modest eyes and her dulness. But above all she keeps her vivacious manner when excited. "Note him," she had said in the first Act to Charmian; "Note him, good Charmian, 'tis the man; but note him." Again and again this dancing repetition recurs, as after Antonys death:—
>
> What, what! good cheer! Why how now, Charmian,
> My noble girls! Ah women, women, look,
> Our lamp is spent.
> He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not
> Be noble to myself.
>
> And how from beginning to end, through all her fits and starts, she keeps her languorous, voluptuous manner—
>
> Give me some music, moody food
> Of us that trade in love—
>
> I need not undertake to show."[5]

Certainly, Schücking creates a false dichotomy. The queen who, in order to get herself back in her lover's esteem, sends Mardian to the grief-struck Antony to report that she has killed herself,

> "Say, that the last I spoke was "Antony,"
> And word it, prithee, piteously: hence, Mardian,
> And bring me how he takes my death." (IV, xiii, 8-10)[6]

is no Desdemona-like figure but one still capable of femi-

nine wiles. The Cleopatra who in V, ii, lies to Caesar about her treasure and flies at the unfaithful Seleucus like an angry fishwife reminds us not of Imogen but of the Cleopatra who berated and mistreated the messenger in II, v. How much of the courtesan there is in that last jibe at the eunuch!

> Wert thou a man,
> Thou would'st have mercy on me. (173-4)

Thus she had brutally taunted Mardian in I, v, 8-18. Nor is it amiss to point out that her suicide is no *purely* altruistic act. Of course, Shakspere has made the death motives of his dazzling, many-hued queen complex. Of course, her love for Antony is a great cause. Still, Shakspere does present as the most prominent of the motives for her last action a great fear of being an object in Caesar's triumphal march in Rome and of being an object of Octavia's "demuring."[7] Clearly Cleopatra is not in the last two acts what Schücking says she is—"all tenderness, all passionate devotion, all genuine, unselfish love."[8]

Despite the fault of apocalyptic interpretation which they share with the rest of G. Wilson Knight's work, certain pages in *The Imperial Theme*[9] demolish Schücking's position. Knight's running analysis of Cleopatra as she appears from beginning to end of the play stresses her essential unity. His inductive study demonstrates that the "serpent of old Nile" does not cast her original skin. But not even Knight seems to recognize how basically the harlot she is. Furthermore, I think it worthwhile to point out that Shakspere, besides using more obvious means to convey an impression of her unity, has subtly—but effectively—employed a device of speech decorum which does adumbrate a unified psychology in Cleopatra. It is something more important than what Stoll calls "identity of tone." It is the device of iterative imagery.[10] I hope to show that the obvious harlot and the queenly lover both draw their metaphors from the same storehouse—or bagnio.

But before I come to Cleopatra herself, I would like to point out shortly how she appears to others. Now, any excursion into symbolism will set some readers' critical teeth

on edge. Let us therefore listen to the characters themselves.[11] First hear Antony in Rome (III, iv, 22-3):

> "If I lose mine honour,
> I lose myself."

In I, iv, 55-71, we hear Caesar:

> Antony,
> Leave thy lascivious wassails. When thou once
> Was beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
> Hirsius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
> Did famine follow; whom thou fought'st against,
> Though daintily brought up, with patience more
> Than savages could suffer: thou didst drink
> The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle
> Which beasts would cough at: thy palate then did deign
> The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
> Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
> The barks of trees thou browsed'st. On the Alps
> It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
> Which some did die to look on: and all this—
> It wounds thine honour that I speak it now—
> Was borne so like a soldier that thy cheek
> So much as lank'd not.

In the next scene but one, in II, i, 23-7, Pompey, invoking Cleopatra to hold Antony in Egypt with "witchcraft," "beauty," "lust"—exclaims:

> Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
> Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks
> Sharpen with cloyless sauce his appetite;
> That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour
> Even till a Lethe'd dulness!

Honour is equated with Antony's abstinence in food. Dishonour is equated with Antony's luxuriousness in food. And precisely this note of gourmandism is what Shakspere uses again and again to characterize Cleopatra in the speeches of others. So, to begin with, she characterizes herself (I, v, 29-31):

> Broad-fronted Caesar,
> When thou wast here above the ground, I was
> A morsel for a monarch:

So Pompey speaks of her (II, i, 11-3):

> Mark Antony
> In Egypt sits at dinner, and will make
> No wars without doors:

Thus Enobarbus conceives of her in her first meeting with Antony (II, ii, 225-6):

> And for his ordinary pays his heart
> For what his eyes eat only.

So, too, does Enobarbus again (II, ii, 236-8):

> Other women cloy
> The appetites they feed; but she makes hungry
> Where most she satisfies;

Employing the same image, Pompey laughs at Antony (II, vi, 60-5):

> *Pom.* We'll feast each other ere we part; and let's
> Draw lots who shall begin.
> *Ant.* That will I, Pompey.
> *Pom.* No Antony, take the lot; but, first
> Or last, your fine Egyptian cookery
> Shall have the fame. I have heard that Julius Caesar
> Grew fat with feasting there.

—And Enobarbus once more (II, vi, 118-22):

> *Eno.* . . . Octavia is a holy, cold, and still conversation.
> *Men.* Who would not have his wife so?
> *Eno.* Not he that himself is not so; which is Mark Antony. He will to his Egyptian dish again.

—And Antony in scorn (III, xiii, 116-8):

> I found you as a morsel cold upon
> Dead Caesar's trencher; nay, you were a fragment
> Of Cneius Pompey's;

But perhaps the most interesting occasion of the image is the last (V, ii, 270-4). It is as though Shakspere does not want us to forget that even in her moment of greater regality, even in her moment of transfiguration, Cleopatra is still but a species of sensory satisfaction:

> *Cleo.* Will it eat me?
> *Clown.* You must not think I am so simple but I know the divell himself will not eat a woman: I know that a woman is a dish for the gods, if the divell dress her not.

Our interest in these pages is on the Cleopatra of the second half of the play. We need not stress how Shakspere deliberately creates a bordello atmosphere in the Egyptian court by means of I, ii. What we want to see is the hetaira

psychology of the queen. She herself makes no concealment of her fundamental vocation:

> Give me some music; music, moody food
> Of us that trade in love. (II, v, 1-2)

—Or of her fundamental bias, in her plain words to Mardian:

> I take no pleasure
> In aught an eunuch has: (I, v, 9-10)

She tends constantly to think and speak in suggestive and erotic terms. Only Schücking[12] of all the critics has seen the

> O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
> Do bravely, horse! for wot'st thou whom thou movest? (I, v, 21-2)

amazing eroticism of and the even more striking concealed imagery of her first words to the messenger from Italy:

> Ram thou thy fruitful tidings in mine ears,
> That long time have been barren. (II, v, 23-4)

The clue to her basic make-up is given by Enobarbus (who, as critics have noted, plays the part of Chorus in the drama) at the very beginning, in I, ii, 134-41:

> Under a compelling occasion let women die: it were pity to cast them away for nothing; though, between them and a great cause, they should be esteemed nothing. Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this, dies instantly; I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moments: I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying.

It does not require ingenuity to see the clustered double entendres in this passage.[13] What is important for our present purpose is put sufficiently by Case: "Enobarbus pictures death as a vigorous lover to whom Cleopatra yields willingly." According to this direction, then, Cleopatra is erotic to the quick. And it is no accident on Shakspere's part that in V, ii, she does meet death exactly as Enobarbus here describes her meeting death.[14] In her suicide, imagery, statement, attitude show still the same basic psychology. She is still, however transformed, the same courtesan—avid of love, impatient, jealous of rivals, quick-tempered, voluptuous, feline, thinking in sheerly female terms. Let us look at this scene.

Iras returns with the apparel which Cleopatra has just ordered (V, ii, 226-8):

> Show me, my women, like a queen: go fetch
> My best attires: I am again for Cydnus,
> To meet Mark Antony:

She will meet death, then, as a woman preparing for a prospective lover.[15]

And thus her very denial immediately after,

> I have nothing
> Of woman in me: (237-8)

reinforces how much the woman she has been, is, and will be even to the last.

Iras has brought in the robe and crown. Cleopatra asks for them (279). She has "immortal longings" (279-80). The word "longings"! She speaks in terms of satisfaction of desires and wants this satisfaction. No more shall wine "moist this lip" (281). How conscious she is of the kind of life she is leaving. We are reminded of Pompey's, "Salt Cleopatra, soften thy waned lip!" (II, i, 21). She is impatient, "Yare, yare, good Iras; quick." (82) Is she impatient because she now imagines her lover, Antony, calling and rousing himself to praise her acts (282-4)?[16] She hears Antony mock Caesar (284-6). A few lines later she, herself, will take satisfaction in mocking the latter. — Then impatiently, "Husband, I come:" (286). And immediately after disclaiming the "elements" of "baser life" (288-9), she again displays impatience in, "So; have you done?" (289).

She kisses Iras and Charmian. The line, "Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips" (290), is typical and evocative. Iras dies. The latter's death is described (292-5) in imagery which only one who trades in love would employ:

> Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
> If thou and nature can so gently part,
> The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
> Which hurts, and is desired.[17]

Cleopatra images death just as Enobarbus images it for her in I, ii, 134-41. Then, just as she has been jealous of Fulvia and Octavia, she displays jealousy of Iras, fearing that Iras will meet Antony before her (300-2):

> If she first meet the curlëd Antony,
> He'll make demand of her, and spend that kiss
> Which is my heaven to have.[18]

So applying the asp to her breast, she impatiently addresses it (304-5):

> poor venemous fool,
> Be angry, and dispatch.

Then the scornful tongue (which stung Antony in I, i and I, iii) speaks of Caesar slightingly as less than a worm, as a stupid ass (305-7):

> O could'st thou speak,
> That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass
> Unpolicied!

Only Cleopatra, so inextinguishably a woman, could compare the asp's biting with herself nursing a baby and being lulled into sleep by the sensation (307-9):

> Peace, peace!
> Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
> That sucks the nurse asleep?[19]

And dying becomes such a voluptuous experience[20] that she almost cannot contain herself. The cares of death and of Antony blend into one (310-1):

> As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,—
> O Antony!

Immediately after her death Shakspere sums up in Charmian's words the impression he has been endeavouring to convey to us. In lines 314-5 Charmian seems to conceive of death as a kind of hetairai-keeper who has just received a noteworthy addition. The word she uses is not "queen": it is "lass":

> Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
> A lass unparallel'd.

To Caesar, too, even in death, she is the courtesan (344-6):

> but she looks like sleep,
> As she would catch another Antony
> In her strong toil of grace.

What Schücking and Knight do not note enough is that Shakspere never for a moment ceases to picture Antony and Cleopatra as voluptuaries. Shakspere illustrates in this play that flesh can be transmuted just so far:

*Maec.* His [Antony's] taints and honours
Waged equal with him.
*Agr.* A rarer spirit never
Did steer humanity: but you, gods, will give us
Some faults to make us men. (V, i, 30-3)

We may apply to Cleopatra what she says of another (V, ii, 235-6):

What poor an instrument
May do a noble deed!

But she dazzles the eyes. And she almost escapes moral judgment—but not quite. How consistent Shakspere is in his depiction of her! Thirteen lines before the end of the play we are informed that she had made endless experiments in "*easy* ways to die"!

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[1]*Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays* (New York, 1922), p. 132.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 121-27.

[3]*Ibid.*, pp. 128, 138, *passim.*

[4]*A Sketch of Recent Shakesperean Investigation,* 1893-1923 (London, 1923), pp. 49-50.

[5]*Shakespeare Studies* (New York, 1927), p. 144, footnote 40.

[6]I employ the text and numbering of the Arden edition, ed. R. H. Case, London, 1934, 7th ed.

[7]Because of this double fear, Cleopatra refuses to descend from the monument at the dying Antony's request but has him drawn up instead (IV, xv, 21-9). After she is taken prisoner, she vehemently tells Proculeius that "this mortal house I'll ruin" before she will be showed to "the shouting varletry of censuring Rome" or chastened by "the sober eye of dull Octavia" (V, ii, 48-62). She asks Dolabella whether Caesar intends to lead her in triumph, and he replies in the affirmative (106-10). He tells her this again, adds, "Make your best use of this," and she thanks him greatly (197-206). She then in disgust tells Iras what will happen to them in Rome (206-20). Self-inflicted death is "the way to fool their preparation" (223-5). Even before Cleopatra herself reveals this double fear, Antony taunts her with "Caesar's triumph" and "Patient Octavia" in IV, xii, 32-9. Caesar, too, guesses the power of this fear when he sends Proculeius to her "Lest, in her greatness, by some mortal stroke she do defeat us" and rob him of "in Rome . . . our triumph" (V, i, 64-6).

[8]*Character Problems,* p. 129.

[9]Oxford University Press, 1931, pp. 290-322.

[10]Caroline Spurgeon, *"Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (New York, 1936), p. 377: "Other interesting functions of the images which I may just note here are . . . their aid to the revelation of the temperament and character of the person using them. This is most interesting, and might well be developed further."

[11]There is still much to be done on the symbolism in *A and C*. By "much" I do not mean anything as ample as what Knight does or anything as limited as what Spurgeon does (*ip. cit.*, pp. 349-54). She sees one motif; she does not see the counter-motif; Knight sees almost everything but employs not enough balance and discrimination. The play is literally drenched in direct and indirect references to eating and drinking. Yet Spurgeon in Chart VI indicates only 12 food *images* in *A and C!* In this kind of interpretation, certainly attention to metaphor should not be divorced from attention to non-metaphor if both apply to the same object or activity. Knight appears to recognize this. In *A and C*, for example, Cleopatra's being compared to a feast, Antony's constant references (especially in III, IV) to feasting, and the feasting scene on Pompey's galley are in all parts of Shakspere's designment. The sword and snake references in the play are also important. The best, simplest, and most modest defence of this particular approach to Shakspere's plays is to be found in Msgr. F. C. Kolbe, *Shakespeare's Way* ([London, 1930), pp. vii-xii, 1-2. Msgr. Kolbe does not confine himself to iterative imagery. He is concerned with "deliberate repetition throughout the play of at least one set of words or ideas in harmony with the plot" (p. 2).

[12]*Character Problems*, p. 122.

[13]The sexual signification of "die" in the seventeenth century is made quite clear in Dryden's song in *Marriage a la Mode*, "Whilst Alexis lay press'd"—*The Poetical Works of John Dryden*, Student's Cambridge Edition, ed. G. R. Noyes (Boston, 1909), p. 68; it is indicated too in Pandarus' song in *Troilus and Cressida*, III, i, 131; see also the last three lines of Isabella's speech in "The Insatiate Countess", III, 27 in H. Harvey Wood (ed.), *The Plays of John Manston*, Edinburgh and London, 1939; and the third stanza of Donne's *The Canonization*. It is unfortunate that this meaning has been excluded from N.E.D. The equivocal meaning of "nothing" may be understood from *Hamlet*, III, ii, 125-8. For "celerity," *cf.*, "O, let him [Alexas] marry a woman that cannot go" (I, ii, 60-1). Case's note to this last indicates that commentators have missed the point of Charmian's sentence completely. "Go" and "do" also had equivocal meanings: see Dryden's song and *cf.* I, v, 22, quoted above. Enobarbus' speech is packed with sexual puns. I discover, after writing the above lines that Allen Tate discusses the double meaning of "die" in Donne's *Valediction forbidding mourning* on p. 91 of *Reason in Madness* (1941).

[14]So does Antony, IV, xiv, 99-101:

> but I will be
> A bridegroom in my death, and run into 't
> As to a lover's bed.

[15]This speech inevitably recalls Enobarbus' "The barge she sat in," *etc.* (II, ii, 191-226).

[16]This conception of her dead lover's getting up from where he is lying (in the Elysian fields?) and coming to meet her (282-6) recalls Antony's IV, xiv, 50-2:

> Eros!—I come, my queen:—Eros!—Stay for me:
> Where souls do couch on flowers, we'll hand in hand,
> And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze:
> Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
> And all the haunt be ours.

Thus the voluptuary, Antony, conceives of death as does his mistress. See footnote 14. In Cleopatra's last words death and her lover seem to equate. Shakspere seems to make Antony and Cleopatra deliberately echo each other in the last two acts. There is great significance in this, but the matter is too large to go into here.

[17]Recall I, v, 17-8:

> Think of me,
> That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black . . .

The sexuality of lines 294-5 in Cleopatra's address to the dead Iras is obvious, but that of 292-3 is not. The image is one of two lovers parting after a kiss. In 292 death is the male lover; in 293, nature. I feel sure, too, that the imagery in 292-3 is that of two lovers parting after the climax of physical love.

[18]Note how she conceives of the meeting with Antony after death as a lovers' assignation. Case's note on "curled" is instructive: "Probably she thinks of Antony as she first saw him, 'barber'd ten times o'er' (II, ii, 224 *ante*), again set off to the best advantage for this meeting, as she herself will be (lines 226-228 *ante*) in 'her best attires,' 'again for Cydnus, To Meet Mark Antony'."

[19]Shortly before (V, ii, 7-8), Cleopatra refers to death as a sleep in which one no longer requires the repulsive wet-nursing which "the dung" (*i.e.*, the earth's food) provides for all. Hence, putting both passages together, we get: Life is disagreeable wet-nursing; Death is pleasant wet-nursing. *Cf.* Antony's I, i, 35-6: "Our dungy earth alike Feeds beast as man."

[20]Recall her I, v, 26-7: "Now I feed myself With most delicious poison."

# MR. DOVER WILSON, THE CRITICS AND FALSTAFF

(*Conclusion*)

By Robert W. Babcock

## 4. MR. WILSON AND MR. STOLL

I HAVE just mentioned Mr. Stoll, so let's go ahead with him next. The battle between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Stoll has been going on for some time. In 1933, in *Art and Artifice,* Mr. Stoll damned Mr. Wilson quite conclusively,[73] and Mr. Wilson replied with equal asperity in his *What Happens in 'Hamlet',*[74] in 1935. Now in 1944 Mr. Wilson remarks: "I have learned something from Stoll, on the negative side, as a reference to the notes at the end of this volume will show."[75] The funny part is that he has also learned a good deal from Mr. Stoll on the *positive* side—which he doesn't want to admit. And Mr. Stoll in 1944 also, in his latest book, *From Shakespeare to Joyce,* is still attacking Mr. Wilson.[76]

I'm quite frank to concede that Mr. Stoll presents difficulties, for several reasons, and if you open to him at random in a few pieces over the last 3 years (his first Shaksperian essay came out in 1906), you will find what look like apparent contradictions, or what *are* very blunt statements, or what may be even sentimental rhapsodies. I myself wrote an article on Mr. Stoll 17 years ago[77]—I'm not very proud of it now—and I've often tried to collect myself to do another one, entitled "The Old Stoll and the New Stoll" (not meant to be parodoxical). For Mr. Stoll *has* changed his point of view gradually over 38 years: he started, I venture to say, as a sceptico-historical critic, became purely historical, and has ended up as an historico-aesthetic appreciator. He will himself resent this summary because he has recently (in 1940) insisted[78] that his favorite speech-rhythms idea existed as early as 1915 in his *Othello* monograph. It may have existed then, but that 1915 monograph was sceptical-historical criticism basically. And even in 1937, in his most

wildly sentimental excursion into romantic aesthetic criticism (*Shakespeare's Young Lovers*) he could not eliminate either his sceptical bent[79] or his love for historical criticism in the form of comparative study.[80] So you will have to read Mr. Stoll from beginning to end, 1906-1944 (roughly, say, 8 books and about 60 articles), in order to get a clear picture of his criticism of Shakspere. And this, obviously, Mr. Wilson has never done. Furthermore, Mr. Stoll is even more confusing because his books generally reprint his articles, but in much enlarged and revised form, and so you have to read both the article and its revision in the later book to get Mr. Stoll's final ideas on the subject. For example, he has tackled Falstaff deliberately at least *five different times:* in 1914, in an essay which reappeared much enlarged and revised in 1927 (*Shakespeare Studies*); again in February, 1926, in the *Revue Anglo-Américaine,* in an essay which has been reprinted with further revision and enlargement in 1940 in *Shakespeare and Other Masters;* and again in Chapter XII of his 1944 book.[81] Now I doubt very much whether Mr. Wilson has taken the trouble to cover all of these first four studies of Mr. Stoll on Falstaff alone; he never refers to anything but the 1927 book. And hence he is doing something of an injustice to Mr. Stoll from the start.

To be more specific, Mr. Wilson's chief cry against Mr. Stoll in the present book is that he calls Falstaff a *miles gloriosus* and *nothing more,*[82] though the Cambridge Editor himself admits that Falstaff is both a *miles gloriosus*[83] and a clown..[84] This assertion of Mr. Wilson about Mr. Stoll is flatly wrong. In 1927 the American critic wrote: "Falstaff is not . . . an ordinary stage coward; he is not even a Parolles or a Bobadil."[85] In 1940 he reiterated, Falstaff is "not a mere rogue";[86] he is "not only a picaresque rogue, but a clown, a parasite, a satyr, and a *miles gloriosus*".[87] Falstaff is therefore merely inconsistent in portrayal—"A butt as well as a wit, he has irreconcilable contradictions in his make-up".[88] So Mr. Stoll remains the sceptic, and Mr. Wilson is not reading the whole story of the Minnesota critic's comments on Falstaff. For he even refuses to acknowldge Mr. Stoll's actual praise of Falstaff, which, beginning

slightly in 1914,[89] reached rhapsodic proportions in 1927[90] (this chapter added the speech-rhythms idea not present in 1914) and in 1940.[91] In fact, this praise grew so idolatrous that Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, who has no great love for Mr. Stoll, was forced to remark: "Even our Professor Stoll . . . falls a victim himself to the fat villain's voice".[92] Verily Mr. Wilson is here very unfair to Mr. Stoll.

A minor item that also disturbs Mr. Wilson is his idea that Mr. Stoll considers the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives* to be the same man as the Knight of the *Henry* plays.[93] This is a pure guess, or personal inference, based upon one paragraph of Mr. Stoll's 1927 book,[94] reprinted from 1914—plus some personal animosity, I'm afraid. And I venture to say bluntly, after consulting some students on the subject, that it is flatly false. Mr. Stoll simply intended no such implication. It might interest Mr. Wilson, too, to recall now that even Samuel Johnson in 1765 pointed out no specific difference at all between these Falstaffs.[94a] And recently Mr. Bradby has appealed strongly for the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives*. See also Chandler (1911), W. L. George (1913), Alden (1922), and Mr. Wilson's favorite, Hudson (1880, 1908, 1924) on this topic. Not, of course, that I support this point of view. I'm merely, by implication, defending Mr. Stoll, who never espoused it himself anyway.

Only once does Mr. Wilson directly use Mr. Stoll with deference,[95] but several times, I venture to say, he has used the American critic—or at least ideas for which he should have given Mr. Stoll credit whether he got them from the American or not—without recognition at all! The Vice idea—which I mentioned above as the substantial covering for the core of the book (*i.e.*, the accounting for the rejection of Falstaff)—Mr. Stoll refers to twice in his Falstaff essay in 1927.[96] Mr. Wilson's pet "dramatic-order" idea is also in Stoll,[97] who refers it back to the good old 18th century critic, Richard Stack. The curious fact is that with regard to Falstaff's supposed conscious artistry about his lying after Gadshill, it is Mr. Stoll who actually follows the dramatic order in rejecting such artistry while Mr. Wilson bases his point of view on ideas about Falstaff that could be

derived only from later scenes in the play. Two other popular ideas of Mr. Stoll (running through all his work)—(1) you can't take characters out of a play and treat them as living beings and (2) literature in not life, or life is not art (an idea which Mr. De Voto has been playing with quite recently)—Mr. Wilson uses several times[98] without any reference to Mr. Stoll whatsoever. I do not say that he derived these ideas from the American critic, but I insist that he should have acknowledged them in Mr. Stoll, in addition to some of the "negative" ideas he deliberately pointed out. To conclude, quite frankly, I do not accept Mr. Wilson's original remark, quoted above: "I have learned something from Stoll, on the negative side . . ."[99] I believe he has learned a good deal also on the positive side, which he refuses to acknowledge. And I pointed out this same glaring debt of Mr. Wilson to Mr. Stoll in my article on *What Happens in 'Hamlet'* in the *Shakespeare Assoc. Bulletin* for July, 1936.

Finally—cheer up, we are getting closer to my next section, Mr. Wilson's inconsistencies—something must be said about Mr. Wilson's dual interpretation of Falstaff. To begin with, on p. 45 Mr. Wilson calls Falstaff "an absolute coward" but three pages later he remarks: . . . "he is in no real sense a coward at all." Mr. Wilson has picked up some "sub-insinuated"[100] "impressions"[101] (I'm quoting his precise words), "a secret understanding",[102] so that now he has "transcendentally",[103] as Mr. Stoll would say, discovered an "esoteric"[104] as well as an "exoteric"[104] Falstaff, as Mr. Stoll would also say. And thus, after disclaiming Morgann repeatedly in his book,[105] Mr. Wilson has fallen right back into his lap. In fact, to a page later in the book he appends the note: "This is one of Maurice Morgann's flashes of genius."[106] Back in 1933 Mr. Stoll, I think rightly, warned Mr. Wilson against this transcendtal, double-meaning interpretation of a Shaksperian character[107]—in that case Shylock—and here Mr. Wilson has done it all over again—with Falstaff. Even Mr. Stoll's second warning[108]—to M. Cazamian—on the same subject failed to deter the Cambridge Editor.

You will say that Mr. Stoll himself has pointed out two

incompatible aspects of Falstaff—the butts and the wit.[109] True—he did it also for Shylock, Polonius, Hamlet and Othello. But that was the old sceptical Mr. Stoll, decrying Shakspere's workmanship. Some sceptical critics never proceed another step beyond their scepticism: *i.e.* Rümelin, Pelissier, Shaw. But Mr. Stoll always *has:* either he has used historical criticism to defend Shakspere against these apparent inconsistencies in character portrayal (he did so in all five cases noted above in this paragraph), or he has suggested by way of explanation, too, that Shakspere, in the heat of creation, just let these characters get away from him.[110] And, as I pointed out above, Mr. Stoll has recently moved even further, with his speech-rhythms idea, into an enthusiastic idolatry of Shakspere's characterization — of Cleopatra, the young lovers, Iago, Othello, and Falstaff himself, for this section on Falstaff's prose was added in 1927; it was not in the original 1914 essay. But Mr. Wilson never will take the trouble to read *all* of Mr. Stoll's actual criticism of Shakspere; and even if he did, he might not give the American credit then for his better ideas.

## 5. MR. WILSON'S POSSIBLE INCONSISTENCIES AND ERRORS

I have already suggested three glaring inconsistencies of the Cambridge Editor: his handling of Bradley, Morgann and Johnson. He shows similar inconsistency toward Charlton.[111] But I should also point out the critic's extreme love for H. N. Hudson, which appears particularly throughout his notes at the back.[112] A typical remark is, "Hudson is, I think, the only critice in the nineteenth century to do full justice to the character of Prince Hal".[113] Only once, if I recall rightly, does Mr. Wilson seriously disagree with Hudson: "Hudson, like the rest, misses the function of the Lord Chief Justice".[114] Hence, as far as the present book is concerned, Mr. Wilson is pretty consistent in his attitude toward Hudson. But Hudson in other criticism has favored an active, Elizabethan Hamlet and so makes a strange bedfellow for the author of *What Happens in Hamlet.* In short, once again, as in the case of Mr. Stoll, Johnson, and Bradley, Mr. Wilson has merely abstracted from Hudson the critical

ideas he wants to use (or attack) and ignored all the rest of the critic's remarks about Shakspere. This may be called, I suppose, consistency in inconsistency.

The Cambridge Editor is a bit inconsistent, also, with regard to his own methods. He demands a rigid following of the "dramatic order",[115] but he never does follow it expressly till his very last chapter. On p. 71 he actually apologizes for this obvious inconsistency: ". . . if I may for a moment contravene my own canons and look forward into the next play . . ." And finally at the beginning of his last chapter he more or less apologizes again for having taken so long to get to the direct use of his own "dramatic-order-of-presentation" method.[116] Similarly, he throws out the *Merry Wives of Windsor* on p. 4 and yet uses it deliberately on p. 28. I for one got a bit confused as to *who* was the Prodigal—Falstaff or the Prince—on pp. 35 and 39. But I think this concludes the most obvious of the possible inconsistencies.

At times Mr. Wilson makes rather broad statements that he fails to support properly.[117] "Yet the paragraph [by Hazlitt] . . . is the origin of all later aesthetic criticism of Prince Hal."[118] "Or, if he [Shakspere] failed, as most modern critics seem to imagine . . ."[119] "But most modern critics, as everyone knows, taking their cue from Maurice Morgann . . ."[120] (But most modern critics do *not!*—see my list on the cowardice problem above.) "Critics complain that Hal's character is 'not the offspring of the poet's reflection and passion'."[121] In the last instance Mr. Wilson cites only *one* critic to support his general contention; in the preceding three instances he cited not a single critic. He could learn a bit here from Mr. Stoll in the matter of citing full evidence for a point from many, established critics.

As to his out-and-out errors and mistakes in the text, they are not very many, but some may be serious. Reviewers have already rejected his idea of Falstaff's taking "his turn to wink at the audience"[122] (in the course of his lies about Gadshill) as a bit too wild.[123] In fact, Mr. Wilson's whole detailed description here of Falstaff's positions and moves on

the stage is pretty hard to follow.[124] Again, he thinks that an author always creates in a straight line—though certainly Swift did not in *Gulliver's Travels.* I wonder, too, whether Mr. Wilson, in editing the *Henry IV* plays, will find that his old, regular theories of revision *will* prove that Shakspere created both parts of *Henry IV* in a straight-line sequence. See what has happened to the changing position of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy in *Hamlet!*

In the text itself there are a few actual errors, though nine very serious ones that I counted in the page proof have been caught in the final version. The proofreader herself queried the word *nineteenth* nine lines from the bottom of p. 8, but I notice it is retained in the later version. I cannot make any sense out of the bottom two lines on p. 34: the word *'right'* troubles me. In Chapter I Wilson consistently fails to print italics in Johnson's original text.[125] Again, twice he calls the medieval cycle plays miracle plays.[126] The typesetter was weak in several spots in the page proof, but they have been corrected in the book itself. I have not attempted to check carefully the author's page references, except in a few instances, which were quite correct.

To conclude the case against Mr. Wilson, may I bring up a single matter of sportsmanship? Why should Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Mr. Wilson's late partner in the *New Cambridge Shakespeare,* and the man who, Mr. Wilson acknowledges, gave him the basic idea for his whole book, be slammed so hard?[127] Sir Arthur died on May 12 last, and I should think Mr. Wilson's conscience would be walking the moors a bit. And I must add, finally, that I was a little startled—though I have been subjected to American coeds for many years—by Mr. Wilson's amazing remark: "Now, though decorous is the last word that would occur to anyone in connection with Shakespeare, this is, I believe, the only scene in his plays where 'necking', of any degree of temperature, takes place on the stage.[128] Verily the sedate and meticulous Editor has suddenly become very, very human. He should read Chapter IX in Mr. Stoll's latest book, *From Shakespeare to Joyce* (Doubleday, Doran, 1944).

## 6. THE PAGE PROOF AND THE FINAL VERSION

This section may well appear superfluous, for the paging, except for the note-pages, is essentially the same in both versions, and there is very little change in verbiage. A word like *presented* replaces *represented,*[129] and *Heard* replaces *Taken,*[130] and, perhaps more important, H. N. Hudson is called "A lesser critic" finally rather than "Another critic".[131] On p. 58 three whole lines are moved to the top of this page from the bottom of p. 57 in the page proof, and that changes p. 59 a bit too. On p. 101 a whole new sentence is inserted at the bottom which did not exist at all in the page proof; this sentence introduces, effectivly, a bit of financial evidence. But all these minor changes prove nothing much of importance.

The real changes occur in the notes from p. 129 to the end of the book. Here, apparently, Mr. Wilson got a chance to insert his last-moment "brainstorms". I have noted above and commented on the three new critics inserted[132]—W. W. Lawrence, Rötscher, and Ralli—and some further study could be made of the reasons for these additions. Generally they were cited as merely additional evidence for points given in the text. A few footnotes are quite new, No. 23 on p. 130, No. 60 on p. 133, No. 9 on p. 137, and Nos. 24, 25 and 29 on p. 143. Of these the most interesting is the first one, for here at last Mr. Wilson admits "a weak spot in Johnson's criticism of *Henry IV"!* He has also toned down a bit his attack on Mr. Stoll in No. 6 (p. 129), corrected the Raleigh quotation on p. 130, inserted the right date for Quiller-Couch's *Shakespeare's Workshop* on p. 131, corrected the title of Kingsford's book on p. 131, and added a new sentence on Bradley on p. 143. All of this fussing with the notes has changed the paging considerably, but, all in all, there is actually not *much* difference between the page proof and the final version of the book.

## 7. MR. WILSON'S REDEEMING QUALITIES

There is no doubt that there are many interesting features of this book that make it an important addition to

modern Shaksperian scholarship. The enthusiastic treatment alone is extremely stimulating—look at the way it has urged me on to write all this about it! Also the historical point of view, maintained basically throughout—in the whole mediaeval background thesis, to be specific — is a decidedly stabilizing influence. And it appears further than in merely the basic theme of the book: (1) with regard to language study (pp. 29-30), (2) basic customs, ideas and concepts of Shakspere's Elizabethan audience (pp. 40, 106, 112, 115, etc.); (3) literary source material (pp. 65-6, 69, etc.); and (4) such specific history as the status of the Fleet in Shakspere's time (p. 119). The book is clearly organized, for Mr. Wilson stops often to make perfectly clear just where he is going (pp. 36, 67, 82, 114), and attention is also paid to the actual dramatic structure of the plays (p. 112). His style is good (see especially p. 113), and there is an amusing insertion of modern analogies from time to time (pp. 40, 60, 69, 82-3, and 123).

As I indicated at the beginning, Mr. Wilson has done more critical study, I should say, than for any previous book, but his particular forte in citing evidence comes from his use of the play's text itself (*cf.* p. 27) rather than in the citation of a list of critics to prove his point. Thus the book becomes more interesting and leaves one with an approved idea of the plays themselves—see, for example, his careful exposition of the attitude of Hal's two brothers toward him in Chap. IV. Never have I seen such a clear description of this situation. In fact, his running commentaries on particular scenes, together with his vivid descriptions of the characters in those scenes, provide the most stimulating aspect of the whole book (see pp. 37-8, 50, 63-4, 73-4, 76-7, 90-1, 100, 109, 110, 113, 117—you will recall here, I hope, that I give pages specifically because the book has no index).

As to his possible new contributions to scholarship on Falstaff, I'll suggest a few, all concerned with the acting problems. I've mentioned above that I think Mr. Wilson owes something to Mr. Granville-Barker's *Prefaces* for his broad excursion in this book into the field of actor-business in Shaksperian drama. Time and again[133] he points out how

modern actors should do a scene—in the Shaksperian way—and this, of course, provides a second very stimulating feature of the book. His most interesting suggestions here are: (1) his attempt to solve the cowardice problem once for all by his insistence that only a good actor is needed to get across Falstaff's "extreme terror and complete self-possession at one and the same time,"[134] (2) his description of how Prince Hal should act over the dead body of Percy,[135] (3) his picture of Falstaff's new habit and its effect in Part II,[136] (4) his optimistic idea of the inter-cooperation between players and scholars,[137] and finally, (5) his most startling suggestion of all, *i.e.,* his accounting for the death of Falstaff at Shakspere's hands by the withdrawal of Will Kemp from Shakspere's company[138] (this idea he admits he got from an American scholar, H. D. Gray, who proposed it in 1930).[139] This, of course, is more properly a bit of historical criticism, but it grows directly out of Mr. Wilson's intense interest in the acting tradition of the play. To turn to the critics on this, though, the Cambridge Editor has made no mention at all of the authoritative book on the subject by an American specialist, T. W. Baldwin, who, incidentally, in April, 1931, wrote an article entitled, "Will Kemp not Falstaff"![140]

## 8. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Inasmuch as *Henry V* lies ahead of Mr. Wilson for dramatic study, to say nothing of the full editing of both *Henry IV* plays and of *Henry V* itself, a few suggestions for Mr. Wilson's future are now in order. Let's go back to the Cambridge Editor's friend Johnson again. Johnson is worried about Upton's textual division of Parts I and II of *Henry IV,*[141] he is also upset about the lack of Folio 1 scene division in Part II,[142] and finally he cannot figure out, to his own satisfaction, just where *Henry V* did, or should, begin, textually.[143] He also berates Shakspere for losing complete track of Poins,[144] and all these textual worries are most interesting for even as Mr. Wilson went back to Johnson for his *dramatic* study of the *Henry* plays, so may he use Johnson as the starting point for his discussion of the plays' textual problems. What is he going to do, for instance, with Johnson's flat questioning of Vernon's second speech, about the

Prince's praise of Hotspur?[145]—lines which, as I indicated above, Mr. Wilson in the present book has accepted without question and used as a distinct buildup for Prince Hal.[146] All in all, Samuel Johnson could again give Mr. Wilson a running start in his next Shaksperian task, the editing of the *Henry IV* plays and of *Henry V*.[147]

Johnson also may suggest to Mr. Wilson a problem of dramatic interpretation that I have never seen satisfactorily solved. Johnson writes very bluntly about King Henry V (or Prince Hal grown up): "The King is in a very bloody disposition. He has already cut the throat of his prisoners, and threatens to cut them again.[148] This doesn't sound much like Prince Hal. And may I requote Johnson's later remark (I have already used it above with regard to Mr. Wilson and Johnson): "I know not why *Shakespeare* now gives the King nearly such a character as he made him formerly ridicule in *Percy*. This military grossness and unskilfulness in all the softer arts does not suit very well the gaieties of his youth."[149] That does it, as my students would put it. King Henry V as a character is no longer Prince Hal! I'm surprised that Mr. Stoll has never noted any essential difference, for his teacher, Mr. Kittredge, told him about it many years ago. My notes (over 25 years old) have these scattered notations by "Kitty" (I tried hard to follow him precisely in class):

> "Prince Hal-discursive, brilliant fireworks that hit the mark.
>
> Henry V—intellect which proceeds solidly, heavily straight to conclusion.
>
> Their minds are different—one *couldn't* develop into the other! [My exclamation point.]
>
> Critics work to explain change here in character. It's a mental change. Moral change is nothing.
>
> Compare Oliver in *AYLI*—Converted in a moment."

That comment was given to us by "Kitty" in English 2 at the end of Act I, and so far I have not seen a Ginn Edition of the Kittredge *Henry V*[150] to check whether he maintained the idea to the end of his career. But it's a gem of modern sceptical criticism of Shakspere, particularly with that added analogy to *AYLI*. Mr. Stoll would explain both inconsistencies (if he is willing to admit them) by historical

dramatic convention, and Mr. Kittredge's explanation in class was somewhat similar: "Shakespeare had liberty to work this way with historical characters." The fact remains, then, that two of Mr. Wilson's pet critics—Johnson and Kittredge—*both* see a distinctly *different* man in Henry V from the boy Prince Hal (so does Bradley, apparently).[151] What is Mr. Wilson going to do with this problem? I give it to him for his future dramatic study of *Henry V*.

To conclude, at long last, in this future editing and dramatic interpretation I am going to hope that Mr. Wilson will follow his own thesis stated so aptly on the last page of his book: "For what Lascelles Abercrombie called our liberty of interpreting Shakespeare must be constantly checked and reinspired by the discipline of Shakespearian scholarship."[152] That has been my chief joy in writing this paper, and I am sure all Shaksperian scholars—British and American—will stand together here forever.

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[73]*Art and Artifice* (Camb. Univ., 1933), pp. 110-11.

[74]*What Happens in Hamlet* (Macmillan, 1935), p. 250.

[75]P. 1.

[76]*From Shakespeare to Joyce* (Doubleday, Doran, 1944), pp. 92, 240, 251, 258, 265.

[77]In the *Sewanee Review*, Jan., 1927.

[78]*Op. cit.* (1940), p. viii.

[79]*Shakespeare's Young Lovers* (Oxford Univ., 1937), p. 34.

[80]*Ibid.*, pp. 11, 16, etc.

[81]*Op. cit.* (1944), Mr. Stoll says it is "the third time", but he is merely assuming that two articles were reprinted in his books of 1927 and 1940. As a matter of fact both were "altered and enlarged" (his own words).

[82]Pp. 83, 138. I do think that one of my own students, Mr. Thomas Mandelaris, was right when he objected to Mr. Stoll's attribution of malice to Falstaff—in *Shakespeare Studies* (1927), p. 481.

[83]P. 20.

[84]P. 39.

[85]*Op. cit.* (1927), p. 408, And cf. p. 487.

[86]*Op. cit.* (1940), p. 299.

[87]*Ibid.*, p. 242. And in 1944 it was twice pointed out that Falstaff is "both a butt and a wit at the same moment"—*op. cit.* (1944), pp. 219 and 229.

[88]*Ibid.* (1940), p. 100. And see the last note for 1944.

[89]*MP*, XII (1914), 106.

[90]*Op. cit.* (1927), pp. 485 ff.

[91]*Op. cit.* (1940), pp. 38, 102. There is so much rhapsody in the 1944 essay, though Mr. Stoll does remark therein: "The fat knight's wit has carried all before it and he himself has flourished like a green bay tree" (p. 231).

[92]*On Reading Shakespeare* (N. Y., 1933), p. 132.

[93]Pp. 4, 129-30.

[94]*Op. cit.* (1927), pp. 455-6.

[94a]In 1773—Johnson and Stevens' edition, I, 311-2—he did change his mind to a very large extent but not to the extent of seeing a *different* creation, such as the "composite character", based upon the *Jealous Comedy,* which Mr. Wilson supports in his New Cambridge Edition (pp. 98-9). Incidentally here I should add, too, that "Q" himself accepted this "amorous" Falstaff as a direct outgrowth of the old Falstaff: "For the Falstaff of *The Merry Wives* is the Falstaff of *King Henry IV*" (New Cambridge Shakespeare, *MW,* p. xxix).

[95]P. 139.
[96]*Op. cit.* (1927), pp. 435, and 480.
[97]*Ibid.,* p. 410 n.
[98]Pp. 9-10, 16, 46, etc.
[99]P. 1,
[100]P. 48.
[101]Pp. 48, 51.
[102]P. 51.
[103]*Op. cit.* (1940), p. 358.
[104]*Ibid.,* p. 294.
[105]Pp. 3, 9, 44, etc.
[106]P. 138.
[107]*Op. cit.* (1953), pp. 110-11. He also attacked M. Cazamian for it in 1940—*op. cit.* (1940), pp. 350 ff.
[108]*Op. cit.* (1940), pp. 350 ff.
[109]See notes 87 and 88 above.
[110]Cf. *op. cit.* (1927), pp. 452-3. Compare O, J, Campbell on Isabella, *op, cit,* (1943), p. 125.
[111]Pp. 43, 140, 143, 144.
[112]Pp. 129-41.
[113]P. 137.
[114]P. 141.
[115]P. 3.
[116]P. 114.
[117]Pp. 7, 36, 44, 62.
[118]P. 7.
[119]P. 36.
[120]P. 44.
[121]P. 62.
[122]P. 53.
[123]See Edmund Wilson in *The New Yorker,* April 29, 1944 and S. C. Chew in the N. Y. *Herald Tribune,* May 14, 1944.
[124]Pp. 53-5.
[125]Pp. 5, 12, 14.
[126]Pp. 17, 21.
[127]P. 43, and see his note 14 on p. 134.
[128]P. 108.
[129]P. 75.
[130]P. 116.
[131]P. 129.
[132]P. 132, 143.
[133]See pp. 37, 46, 62, 66, 79, 91, 97-9, 124-5, 141.
[134]P. 46.
[135]P. 66.
[136]P. 91.
[137]P. 97.
[138]Pp. 124-5.
[139]Mr. Wilson does not give the full reference; it is: H. D. Gray, "The Roles of William Kemp", *MLR,* XXV (1930), 261-73.
[140]*MLR,* XXVI (1931), 170-2. To which Mr. H. D. Gray was allowed to reply in *Ibid.,* pp. 172-4. Mr. O. J. Campbell in *Shakespeare's Satire* (Oxford, 1943), mentions this debate but leaves the matter still in doubt—p. 17. Prof. H. Spencer (1940), another American, writes, "Who created the role of Falstaff is not known" (p. 187).

Mr. Baldwin's book of course is *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakesperian Company* (Princeton, 1927).

[141]*Op. cit.* (1765), IV, 235.

[142]*Ibid.*, IV, 291.

[143]*Ibid.*, IV, 355.

[144]*Ibid.*, IV, 353.

[145]*Ibid.*, IV, 217. Johnson's remark is: "*Prince Henry*, in his challenge of *Percy*, had indeed commended him but with no such hyperboles as might represent him above praise, and there seems to be no reason why Vernon should magnify the Prince's candour beyond the truth. Did then *Shakespeare* forget the foregoing scene? or are some lines lost from the prince's speech?"

[146]P. 66. 147.

[147]Not much has been done by modern scholars on the textual problems of the Henry IV plays. See, however, A. E. Morgan (1924), Cowl (1927), Greg (1928), Schücking (1930), Cowl (1935), Hemingway (1936), Crundell (1939), and Shaaber (1940).

[148]*Op. cit.* (17653, IV, 461.

[149]*Ibid.*, IV, 479.

[150]The Company has just written me (July 7, 1944) that there is no such text yet.

[151]*Op. cit.* (1909), p. 257. Mr. Wilson could also read Mr. Stoll's essay on *Henry V* in *Poets and Playwrights* (1930).

[152]P. 128.

# SPENSER IN LOW COMPANY?

By JOHN L. LIEVSAY

RICHARD VENNAR[1] (or Venner, or Vennard), "of Lincolnes Inne Gent." author (in a small way), wag (with a larger scope),[2] and connoisseur of prison-interiors, well-known to Elizabethans and Jacobeans under his nickname of "England's Joy,"[3] published in 1601 a work entitled *The Right Way to Heaven.* This unauthoritative chart was then reprinted in 1602, with additions and other changes, as *The Right way to Heauen, and a good presedent for Lawyers and all other good Christians. With an Exhortacion to continue all Subiects in their due obedience: together with the reward of a faithful subiect to his Prince.*

A thin little quarto of pious meditation and exhortation, garnished with conspicuous patriotism, this 1602 volume is a mixture of prose and verse of small interest or value except for some traces of possible Spenserian association. The verso of the title-page, for instance, is given to a cut set between the halves of the following legend: "Saint George for England. [above] And Christ for our Queene" [below]. Herein one may see depicted St. George, mounted and be-plumed, a cross prominently displayed on his breast, in mortal combat with the dragon. The latter, as befits such rabble, is mainly omitted from the picture, his head and one claw only appearing in the lower right-hand corner. He has obviously already had the worst of the encounter, as one gathers from the broken-off lance projecting from his gorge and from the verse on the opposite page wherein the symbolism is helpfully explained. A little withdrawn to the rear, Una-like, stand a virgin, in attitude of busy prayer, and a lamb whose eyes seem fixed upon the gaping monster.

Explanatory verses on the following two pages (sigs. A.ij.-A.ij.$^{v}$) lay bare a kind of threefold allegory. St. George slew the dragon; Christ overcame Satan's pride; and Charles (Blount), Lord Mountjoy, now being dispatched by her Majesty to Ireland, it is hopefully argued, will

> Quell that Hells shape of diuelish proud Terone.

The five six-line stanzas are of rather less than indifferent poetic merit, as may be gathered from the first of the lot:

> A Virgin Princesse and a gentle Lambe,
> domb'e[5] both to death to gorge this vgly beast:
> This valiant victor like a Souldier came,
> and of his owne accord, without request:
> With neuer daunted spirit the Fiend assaild,
> perseru'd the Princesse, and the Monster quaild.

Despite the feeble quality of the verse, the whole ensemble of verse and picture recalls Una, her lamb, and her Red Cross volunteer champion of *The Faerie Queene,* Book One.

Following the two main prose sections, *The high way to Heauen* (sigs. B.-E.ij.) and *An Exhortacion to continew all Subiects in their dew obedience* (sigs. E.iiij.-G.iij.), there occur on sigs G.iij.$^{v}$-G.iiij.$^{v}$ some further verses[6] with interesting suggestions of Spenser. These bear the caption, "The Authors true commendation of the vertuous and honorable Ladies[7] *Anne Countesse of Warwicke, and Margaret* Countesse of Cumberland, two of the noble affected daughters, of the late Right Honorable Francis, called the good Earle of Bedford." The verses consist of a couplet motto and six stanzas of varying length. Since these are the same "Right Honorable and Most Vertuous Ladies" to whom Spenser dedicated his *Fowre Hymnes,* one almost expects to find Vennar employing rhyme-royal. Actually, however, only the third stanza is of this form; and one need but read it to discover that the beauty of the poetic spirit in Vennar

> Dwels in deformed tabernacle drownd,

lost in the unapt substance of a too-too stubborn ground:

> Great Ladies Warwicke and Cumberland both,
> two sweetest flowres from one firtile ground:
> Fayre Honor prosper their most blessed growth,
> and enuious Caterpillers quite confound.
> that would diminish plants so good & sound,
> That in despite of malice they may stand,
> till time shall plucke them with most holy hand.
>
> (Sig. G.iiij.)

Perhaps the most interesting of all these stanzas is the last one. Here the nine-line form, in conjunction with the

rest of these provocative associations, suggests that Vennar was attempting—and very early—to use Spenser's own stanza:

> O deere respectiue Ladyes Honours pride,
> the constant traces of all vertuous waies:
> Angels and Saints your blessed Honors deuide:
> for in your deedes liue euerlasting praise.
> Three ages lengthened bee your godly daies:
> And when the period comes, Heauen take to rest,
> the spotles soules of these most welcome guests.
> For what my penne doth fayle, Heauen keepes in store,
> Where their good deedes shall triumph euermore.
> (Sig. G.iiij.[v])

But alas, attention to the rhyme-scheme, and even the addition of a full complement of beats to the defective alexandrine, would leave us still with a stanza over which Spenser would have shuddered.

*Stanford University.*

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[1]Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography, s.v.*

[2]One of the "cousening prancke[s] of one Venner, of Lincolns Inne" is amusingly detailed by chatty old John Chamberlain, *Letters,* ed. Sarah Williams (Camden Soc., 1861), p. 163. Worthy of the mad pranks of George Peele, *et al.,* it seems actually to have had jest-book precedent; cf. *Mery Tales, Wittie Questions and Quicke Answeres* (1567), ed. W. C. Hazlitt, *Shakespeare Jest-Books* (London, 1864), I, 145-147.

[3]Vennar's own defence, with details of his family, education, and travels may be read in *An Apology: Written by Richard Vennar, of Lincolnes Inne, abusively called Englands Joy* (1614), ed. J. P. Collier, *Illustrations of Old English Literature,* III (London, 1866). A broadside entitled *The plot of the play, called Englands ioy. To be Played at the Swan this 6. of Nouember, 1602. is printed* in E. C. Wilson, *England's Eliza* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), pp. 54-56.

[4]These stanzas and the cut of St. George, though not the verses hereafter described, are carried over (in somewhat different position within the text) from the ed. of 1601; cf. Nichols, *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth,* III (1805), 439-448.

[5]Nichols' transcription, *op. cit.,* p. 446, from the edition of 1601 makes better sense: *Doomb'd.*

[6]These verses are replaced by others in the undated (1602 ?: *STC*) reprint of this second prose piece.

[7]Some clarification of Vennar's connections with these two members of the great Russell family may be gleaned from the following paragraph in his *Apology:*

> "First, to beginne at those places which cry for our charity to deafe eares, I say the miserable captives in the Kings Bench and in the Fleete, having fixed in my minde the worthily registered motto of Queen Elinor, wife to our Henry the second, who after long imprisonment, being released by her sonne, Richard the first, and made Regent of the Land, made a generall infranchisement of all prisoners, whom murther, or execution for great summes deteyned not, setting under her escushion this verse, *Non ignara mali miseris succerrere disco.* So from mine owne miseries, which is our truest schoole-maister, learning to pitty others, I was one of those that, with the assistance of the noble Countesses, Margaret Countesse of Cumberland, and that honourable and vertuous Lady, Anne Countesse of Warwick, her sister, that furthered the late Queenes most gracious commission

[sweet words from a man whom Eliza herself had jugged!] for the speedy enlargement of all unable debtors, assisted therein by these worthy minded Knights, viz., Sir Stephen Soame, Sir John Wats, Sir Edmund Bowyer, Sir Thomas Hunt, and Sir Thomas Gardnar, knights: which mercy being stopt by the hand of a severe Judge, I was not behind hand in recording it to our most compassionate now king; whose speedy re-grant thereof, I doubt not, in the generall benefite of this land, will shortly shew it selfe. . . .

# EDITORIAL NOTES AND COMMENTS

*By* S. A. T.

## A GREAT WORK

The J. B. Lippincott Company has just published one of the most important and valuable books in the realm of Shaksperiana. It is a variorum edition of the Shakspere *Sonnets* in two volumes, the first (pp. xx + 404) containing the 1609 text of the *Sonnets,* the emendations proposed by editors and commentators since that date, as well as the interpretations and misinterpretations of words and phrases which critics and interpreters, sane and near-sane, thought required elucidation. The second volume (pp. viii + 532) contains a chronologically arranged discussion by the editor—Professor Hyder E. Rollins of Harvard University, one of the best qualified and most scrupulously scientific scholars in America—of almost everything that has been written on the Shakspere *Sonnets* by scholars, critics, faddists, eccentrics, and nit-wits during the past 350 years. Dr. Rollins has arranged these appendixes to the *Sonnets,* dealing with the vexatious problems relating to the text, the identities of the persons involved in the story or stories told by these 154 poems, the date of composition, the vogue of the *Sonnets* in various countries, and so forth, under fourteen headings. A superb name and subject index, which enables the student to find easily almost anything he may be looking for in relation to the *Sonnets,* completes the second volume. To omit a word of praise for the format of this book and for the excellence of the printing and the proofreading would be to do the publisher and Dr. Rollins or his proofreader a gross injustice. Even after careful search I have not found a single typographical error or erroneous reference.* Dr. Rollins must also be congratulated on having kept his sanity and mental clarity while wading through all the reams of sterile discussions of the insoluble problems associated with the *Sonnets* by the legitimate (scientific) inquirers and the eccentric and prurient meddlers who have devoted their energies to these baffling compositions.

Dr. Rollins, as might be expected, has made good use of the late Raymond M. Alden's—one of the finest and ablest American scholars that ever drew breath—and of my bibliographies of the *Sonnets.* He will not resent my saying that, notwithstanding this, his bibliography is not complete. No bibliography of any Shaksperian topic can ever be complete, for many reasons which I shall not go into here. Several hundred of Rollins's and my previous omissions will be listed in a forthcoming volume supplementing my published Shakspere bibliographies.

In closing this brief notice of a work which will rank as an imperishable monument to Shakspere, to the *Sonnets,* and to Dr. Rollins, I wish to say that this book is one of the finest examples of Shakspere scholarships to have issued from any university or commercial press, is beyond cavil the best book in the Furness Variorum edition of Shakspere's works, and is well worth the $17.00 for which it is sold.

*But we cannot repress our astonishment at the last sentence ("at many . . . to praise.") in the last paragraph on page 399 of volume 2.

PR[illegible]

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